

116

ADDRESS AND REPORT ON THE ENQUIRY INTO THE GENERAL STATE OF THE POOR.

INSTITUTED BY ORDER OF THE LAST
EPIPHANY
GENERAL QUARTER SESSION
FOR THE
COUNTY OF HAMPSHIRE.

Second Edition.

VIVE, VALE. SI QUID NOVISTI RECTIUS ISTIS,
CANDIDUS IMPERTI; SI NON, HIS UTERE MECUM.

PRINTED BY ROBBINS, WINCHESTER;
AND SOLD BY HIM,
AND ALL OTHER BOOKSELLERS IN HAMPSHIRE.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]
1795.



44
3. 29.
81.

Hants Epiphany Session, 1795.

THE COURT, on the Motion of LOVELACE BIGG WITHER,
Esq. seconded by the Rev. EDMUND POULTER, came to the
following Resolutions unanimously:—

THIS COURT, taking into Consideration the general Expediency of
procuring the most accurate Information respecting the Expence, the
Management, and the Condition of the Poor within their Jurisdiction,

DOETH RESOLVE,

THAT a Committee be appointed to make the necessary Enquiries, and to
report the Result thereof to the next Easter Session.

That the Committee be composed of all the Acting Magistrates within the
County, and of such other Persons as they shall from Time to Time
join with them.

That the Deputy Clerk of the Peace be the Clerk to the said Committee.

That the necessary Expences of the Committee be submitted to the Con-
sideration of the next Easter Session.

That the first Meeting of this Committee be at the White Hart Inn,
Winton, at the rising of the Court.

That the Committee have a Power of appointing Sub-Committees, and of
Adjournment to such Times and Places as they shall judge expedient.

That the above Resolutions be advertised in the County Papers.

AT

*AT an Adjourned Meeting of the Committee, on Wednesday,
January 14, 1795,*

RESOLVED,

THAT every Bench of Magistrates, acting within the County, be hereby appointed a Sub-Committee, to which the following Quæries are to be sent:—

WHAT is the Amount of the Poor Rates ?

What Proportion do they bear to the Rent of the Land ?

Have they increased within these last seven Years ?

What is the Number of your Inhabitants ?

Have you any Manufactories ?

What is the usual Rate of Husbandry Wages ?

How are your Women and Children employed ?

Have you a Poor-House or House of Industry ; If you have, what has been its Effect on your Rates, and on the Morals and Comforts of the Poor ?

Do you think such a general House is better than the Poor being dispersed in different particular Houses ?

Have you any Sunday or other Charity Schools ?

What is the average Price of Wheat, Flour, Bread, Meat, particularly Bacon, and other Necessaries ?

Has it been usual, on Applications for Relief, to calculate what is necessary for the Subsistence of a poor Family, on any regular Statement of so much per Head ?

What is the usual Mode of Living among the Poor ?

What is the Kind of Subsistence you think requisite for a Labourer, so as properly to support himself and Family, and thence to be enabled to do Justice to his Employer ?

What would be the Amount of such Subsistence ?

Have you any Friendly Society ?

By Order,

ROB. R. CORBIN, CLERK.



WINCHESTER, JULY 11, 1795.

*AT an open Committee on the Enquiry into the General State
of the Poor,*

RESOLVED,

*THAT, an ADDRESS and REPORT having been presented by the Rev.
EDMUND POULTER to this Committee,*

*The said REPORT be adopted by them as their GENERAL REPORT, and
proposed to the Quarter Session ensuing; and that the said ADDRESS
be approved, and recommended to be published.*

Wants Midsummer Session, 1795.



*AT the General Quarter Session of the Peace, holden at the
Castle of Winchester, in and for the said County, on
Tuesday the 14th Day of July, 1795,*

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,

*THAT an ADDRESS and REPORT having been presented to this Court
by the Committee of Magistrates on the ENQUIRY INTO THE
GENERAL CONDITION OF THE POOR, the same be received and
published for the Use of the Magistrates and the County, and the
further Consideration of them adjourned to the next Session.*

*THAT the unanimous Thanks of this Court be given to the Committee
in general, and particularly to the Rev. EDMUND POULTER, the
Author of the said Address and Report.*

5



ADDRESS, &c.

WE judge it most respectful to others, as well as creditable to *Intre*
 ourselves, and serviceable to our cause, to attempt convincing the reason,
 and conciliating the affections, previous to requiring the conformity,
 of the County; to excite rather than enforce their conduct; we there-
 fore have not deemed it sufficient to present a bare naked Report, but
 to clothe it in the best manner our materials enable us to accomplish
 our work; to prove as well as assert our facts; to argue as well as
 advance our opinions; to appeal to the judgment as well as the feeling;
 to attract attention to the particular detail of our Report before ex-
 pecting assent to its general summary. Our propositions and proofs
 we desire to be taken together, and the one admitted only as far as
 supported by the other. In short we mean the Address to be an intro-
 duction to the Report, and the Report a recapitulation of the Address;
 the adoption of both which on the whole, for common purposes, not
 notwithstanding partial objections, is not meant to pledge all on every fact,
 still less on every opinion; it is rather proposed as a general compromise
 to the collective terms of which we may submit at large, than a par-
 ticular contract to every condition of which we are individually and
 strictly bound. With such extension alone it is that we can presume to
 offer, or that the Sessions can be expected to admit, any general
 opinions at all, from some of which no doubt some of the Bench and
 even of the Committee themselves may be supposed to differ.

It is in the first place justice to those in general throughout the
 county to whom the Committee applied for information and assistance,
 particularly to the officiating Ministers who have especially exerted
 them-

themselves in it, to acknowledge the favor of their communications, made in a manner that proves, at the same time with their own individual attention to the subject, the general importance of which it is considered; being that subject of all others the most peculiarly delicate and difficult; wherein misrepresentation is to be guarded against even before representation made; wherein it is requisite to anticipate what is not its purport, previous to stating what is. While therefore the Reporters cautiously avoid misrepresentation themselves, they anxiously deprecate misapprehension in others.

It is equally due to the feelings of all, to the apprehension of the higher, the moderation of the middle, and the expectation of the lower orders, to protest against their several false fears, groundless anxieties, or vain hopes. This is no opposition between their different interests, no conflict amongst their various passions, no interference with their separate habits, no exclusive design to benefit one part of the community, though the greater, to the injury of the other; no sacrifice of one order to the triumph of another; in short no single separate advantages are here holden out to any, but the double benefit, general satisfaction, reciprocal service, mutual happiness of all together, are connectedly considered. Individual attention is attracted to common concern, the uniform practice of Brotherly Love and Christian Charity is inculcated on the universal principle of Philanthropy.

We reprobate the vague ideas of projects not reducible to practice; speculations not to be substantiated; of morals above manners, zeal beyond knowledge, indiscriminate enthusiasm, and wild fanaticism; with all which this subject has peculiarly abounded; which by their intrusion have not only failed themselves, but have also precluded that success the matter itself would be entitled to under more rational and temperate conduct of it. We assert not indefeasible rights, but feasible expedients; and disclaim attempting all theoretical excellence, as the best chance of succeeding in some small practical good, small indeed

to

to each, but to all most important, on the principle that a little service to a great many becomes in itself great.

The object of all good members of society is to produce content in its different orders with themselves, and with each other; it is the persuasion that this can be done on every argument which makes us adduce any on a subject otherwise as anxious as arduous. Yet the more safely to secure the good without risk of the evil, we must guard all whom it concerns against any partial discontent, either from what we shall say, or they may conceive, on a subject which calls for their general content; so far from creating any new complaint, we trust rather in removing such as may have before existed.

If there occur in society, as there must, rare instances of unjust oppression on the one side, or of unreasonable complaint on the other, neither the whole description of the rich, or the poor, are to be promiscuously condemned for these few exceptions.

If a particular season of severity, such as the last winter, or of scarcity, such as the present summer, produce general distress for the time, let not that create general discontent, because it is also found that the exertions of the rich have fully met the emergencies of the poor, and such rare evils can alone be met by such occasional remedies; for it is impossible that any ordinary establishment can provide for such extraordinary cases. If in fact it could, it would be but a particular contingent benefit, at the expence of a general certain injury; for that establishment, which in the extreme instance might only supply want and support industry, in the common case would encourage idleness and promote vice.

If independent even of such emergency, a general case of deficiency occur, such as possibly the gradual increase in the price of the necessaries of life beyond that of the labour by which they ought to be procured, may now tend to produce; so that general case, in pro-

portion as it is found, by the deliberate enquiry now made, to exist, will certainly be meliorated in the moderate, gradual manner alone which such an important measure either admits or requires. As far as the condition of the poor may be found to have grown by imperceptible degrees worse, it will as assuredly in the end, but must also as gradually in the means, be rendered better. As there must be a fluctuation in the affairs of all, it were as absurd to attempt suddenly to change the course of these successive events, as to bid the water ebb before it had done flowing. It becomes all therefore to be patient under present sufferance, as the only means of obtaining future relief; for nothing is more certain than that precipitation in time, or extravagance in degree of improvement, either holden out by the rich, or required by the poor, would injure both. Hasty, violent, or excessive measures in this case could not in the first place succeed, or if they did, could not continue; it is in the nature of a compact wherein if too much be conceded, it is liable to be resumed; and the failure of the whole endangered by the defect in any part. They are therefore equally enemies to all orders of men, who would make great, sudden changes in any; in the political, as the natural world, all quick transitions are injurious—*Natura non facit saltus*. Improvement, to be lasting in duration, must be gradual in progress, and moderate in extent. It is not by the pressure, but by the hasty struggle to remove it, that the most injury is felt. Herein the reason of Man proves itself superior to the instinct of Brutes; that, under the perception of temporary pressure, Man by patiently awaiting, facilitates and expedites its removal; while Brutes, under partial restraint, incur the risk of total destruction, and by their premature efforts to extricate, involve themselves the more, not only failing in their own, but preventing the success if not the attempt of all other exertions in their favour. But to this flattering contrast between Men and Brutes, there seems one exception, in direct contradiction to every impulse of feeling, use of reason, and view of interest, and in opposition to the otherwise uniform law in our nature of self preservation; namely, the

singular

singular instance of people under the deficiency of provisions destroying them, spontaneously precipitating themselves from scarcity to famine.

“ Then judgment art thou fled to brutish Beasts,

“ And Men have lost their reason !”

It were an abuse of our own intellects and the understandings of others, to argue this case, this solecism in human nature. Intuitive truth can only be stated ; matter of wonder need only be met by exclamation. O ! most improvident violence ! O ! infatuation worse than blind, because it sees wrong ! O ! worse than common idiocy, for it is mischievous ! O ! greater than ordinary insanity, for it is arguing wrong on wrong principles !

To burn Ricks because Corn is scarce !

To destroy Corn-Mills because Flour is scarce !

To demolish Bakers' Shops because Bread is scarce !

In short, because supply is difficult, to make it impossible—to destroy our own ends by our own means. Never let any be persuaded to such strange acts, or what is similar, to the criminality, as well as folly, of confiscating private property by forcibly and feloniously stealing commodities, or lowering their market prices ; by which robberies, as they are in either case, the criminals themselves forfeit their lives to the injured laws of their country, and the commodities in question are the more instead of less withholden from the public in general, through the fear of particular depredation. Let the poor be assured that such incitements to commotion, are the malicious devices of their enemies on purpose to prevent the generous assistance of their friends ; disorders to frustrate remedies ; evil to hinder good. As nothing but the instigation of the Devil can cause, so may Heaven avert, these horrible scourges with which we become our own self-tormentors ! *

* It cannot be made too public, that the Judge in his Charge at the last Assizes stated that it was not only clear in Law that forcibly lowering the price of commodities, and seizing them at such prices, either at market or on the road, is a Capital Offence, but also that it is of so heinous a nature as that such offenders can expect no mercy.

To

To the Poor then we say, with confidence they must acknowledge it, that they have real reason for general content with the conduct of the Rich, and if ever they have apparent cause for particular complaint, they ought, from interest as well as virtue, for their benefit as well as credit, for their own sake as well as that of all others, to support it with patience and forbearance towards Men, and resignation to God; for not only is the burthen the lighter, but it will the sooner be removed, the better it is borne. The fear of discontent being raised by the very means taken to remove it too often prevents such attempts being made to serve them at all, or succeeding when made. Let then the poor be cautious, lest they not only become their own enemies, but hinder others from being their friends; lest they leave their protectors to say, "How often would we have gathered you together, as a hen doth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not."

It is not enough to say that no innovation is here proposed, either by the introduction of new, or the change of old, systems of the Poor; on the contrary, the confirmation of the present establishment is proposed, not by any pretended reform of its principles, but by an actual attention to its practice; for in proportion as its competent goodness is admitted, its adequate administration should be secured.

It is not requisite to instruct, nor even to inform, but solely to remind, men of their duty; to lead them *to* their consideration, not *in* it; to tell them what they themselves know; to urge them to recur to their own reflection as the ground of thence adverting to their own conduct.

We presume not to interfere with the legal establishment for the Poor; if the excellence of that were in question, this is not the place, we are not the persons, to decide it, and therefore not to discuss it; for where the power of decision is, there is the propriety of discussion.

The

The Legislative Wisdom alone would be capable of judging on it, the Legislative Authority alone of carrying it into execution. But as any change in the law is not the province of this, or even its superior Bench, so the administration of it is the province of the one, under the cognizance of the other ; and amongst the general duties delegated to us here, the operation of the Poor Laws is in the first instance as to all, in the last as to some, peculiar to ourselves, so as to make this so far from an officious interference, an official concern, and so far from an assumption of Power in doing it, a dereliction of Duty if we had omitted it.

If there were any risk in *instituting* this Enquiry, there would have been at least as much in *resisting* it ; if there be any danger, it is both ways ; and passive indifference would have been at least as dangerous as active interference. The crooked policy of dissimulation in the Magistracy, always objectionable, would be peculiarly in contrast with the direct, plain dealing of the Commonalty : but the useless question of the policy of concealment is here superceded by the previous one of its impossibility. We cannot make the case of the Poor more or less *known*, but we may, more *noticed*. Least of all is it a secret to those who feel it most. Where we cannot, if we would, suppress the sufferance, let us consider, and conciliate, the sufferers ; let us only be as open and plain, as the case itself is, in our reception and treatment of it. Their case being reasonable complaint without contumacy, let our remedy be generous compliance without fear—without the fear either that yields to what is wrong, or resists what is right. Due attention to the Poor being the ground, and just confidence in them the step we take, there is no doubt but mutual satisfaction is easily within our reach.

Whatever might have been the hazard of commencing this Enquiry, or not, there is none in declaring the result of it ; for though that result may not be great in extent, it is all so far good in effect.

Had

Had we evils to hold forth without their remedies, deficiencies without their supplies, obstacles without their removal, we should have abhorred the false philosophy at best that notices failures it cannot amend ; or worse, the ambiguous casuistry that proposes questions it cannot solve ; but worst of all, the malicious sophistry that imposes fallacies on purpose to deceive ; together with all the subtle speculations of modern philosophers, who have raised more doubts than they have removed, perplexed more minds than they have enlightened, introducing scepticism instead of reason and faith in Religion, profligacy instead of decency in Morals, licentiousness instead of liberty in Policy, confusion instead of peace in Society. In direct contrast with these, our views in the commencement, continuance, and conclusion of this Enquiry have been the prosecution of the most glorious end of Happiness by the most laudable means of Virtue, the consideration of Public Benefit by the cultivation of Private Comfort, the progress of National Concord by the encouragement of Domestic Harmony, the attainment of Common Quiet by the instigation to Particular Order, the possession of Universal Peace by the incitement to Uniform Philanthropy.

If indeed we have obvious wants to report, having as easy supplies to suggest ; if sufferings, their alleviation ; if grievances, their consolation ; hardships it is true, but not without the means to soften them ; burthens, but not without the power to lighten them. In short, the result of the Enquiry corresponding in fact with the design of it, we have and give the hope of increasing the comforts of the Poor, without exciting the alarms of the Rich ; of promoting charity as the virtue of the one, and content as that of the other ; of inculcating submission and protection, service and assistance, resignation and attention, as their mutual and reciprocal duties.

The lower part of mankind are naturally conscientious in themselves, and confident of others ; both strong reasons for their patience ; when

when they see, as now, they are considered, they are satisfied, and very justly, for consideration must be in their favour: The very word itself in one of its senses, and that certainly in this usage of it, imports service, and here at least to consider the Poor in the sense of thinking of them, is also to consider them in that of serving them. Men may possibly omit to think at all, but they cannot well think differently, of them. Fellow-feeling towards fellow-creatures may be dormant in many, and thus require to be roused, but it cannot surely be dead in any, so not wanting to be called into existence, though into action. Attention therefore in the rich cannot fail to produce literally assistance, and thence satisfaction to the poor; and the same want of consideration which could object to the enquiry into their case, would alone oppose its improvement.

It is alone the callous indifference, dull supineness, cold apathy, of the rich that could raise the discontent of the poor; till the rich should be lost to all exercise of feeling, to all use of thought, the poor would bear any degree of sufferance; nothing but being wilfully blind to their miseries, obstinately deaf to their cries,ullenly dumb to their entreaties, could overcome their inherent prepossession, respect, and forbearance. The rich and the poor then may rest mutually secure and content with each other, since nothing but what is incredible in the one would be intolerable to the other.

Having endeavoured to remove one prejudice, the fear of attempting the improvement of the poor from the danger of failing in it, by shewing there is no evil, or at any rate the less of two in the attempt, than in the neglect; there is another error more fatal than even groundless timidity, which is mistaken interestedness, in the general fallacy, particularly applied to the case of the poor, that *gain to one* must be *loss to another*. Ill do they judge of human nature who conceive that philanthropy is beneficial only to the objects, not the authors of it; that charity is serviceable only to the receivers, not the

the givers of it ; that humanity is advantageous only to the patient, not the agent in it. On the contrary, it is the nature of all communicated good to be reflected back on the benefactor with accumulation. It is by no constructive subtlety, no ideal refinement, that self-love and social are the same ; they are literally so, not by any fictitious counterchange of sentiment for service, but by the gross measure of interest. This object is therefore to reconcile the interests, as well as conciliate the affections, of all orders together ; to shew the rich by their attention to the poor how the actual account of debtor and creditor is in their own favour ; what they lose in *money* by a misplaced œconomy ; what suffer in *profit* by an ill-judged parsimony ; how they are *injured* by a contracted humanity ; finally, how *impoverished* by withholding sufficient support from the peasant, how *enriched* by extending it to him. For this purpose it is not necessary to assign the many motives, true as they are from humanity, the many arguments unanswerable as they are from security, the many inducements expedient as they are from policy. If the ground of Interest were at variance with all these, the preference might be questioned by any with whom Interest alone weighs more than all these ; yet they too must be stupid as well as Fordid who would doubt even then to decide it the same way. But let not Philanthropists alone, let Philosophers, let Statesmen, let Naturalists, let Politicians, let Financiers, let Arithmeticians, let Pettifoggers themselves, enter into the calculation ; the avaricious, the usurious even, would come to the same conclusion with the wise, generous, and humane. At first sight, but at first sight only, it may appear that the interest of the employer, and employed, are at variance : supposing, what is very doubtful, that the melioration of the Servant were in all cases to be effected by the contribution of the Master, and that the increase of the wages to labourers were the only, whereas it is not the best, or greatest, if any necessary way at all of improving their condition ; it by no means follows that the gain of the

the one is the loss of the other ; on the contrary, in a balance drawn between advance and return, they will find that the income will be in an increased proportion to the outgoing, and that while they give more in pay, they receive back much more in work, to a certain point ; which point is, the proper mean subsistence of man between the extremes of want, and excess. As the harvest is to the seed, so is the produce of labour to its support ; there is a certain sufficiency for both, short of which every grain in each case literally makes a manifold return ; and, independent of humanity in feeling, it would be as absurd in sense, and ruinous in interest, to deprive the labourer of his proper support, as it would be, the ground of its sufficient seed ; for it is as physical an impossibility to stint the labourer without diminishing the labour, as to withhold the due seed without decreasing the returning harvest. The application therefore of proper supply unites at once all the selfish interest of Avarice, with the social service of Philanthropy ; the private benefit of Individuals, with the public advantage of the Community. It being established then that there is a point of proper subsistence which is equally an object in interest as in humanity to ascertain, and to accomplish ; till that great point be settled on the highest national authority, which were much to be wished, by the investigation of experimental philosophers, and practical statesmen ; we in our limited district, information, and authority, must be satisfied with the nearest approximation we can attain towards an object every way so highly important.

When thus every selfish as well as social motive, when the cause of policy and humanity, of interestedness and generosity, of conduct and conscience, of nature and art, of God and man, all coincide together and declare aloud the same uniform sentiment with one united voice, too clearly to be misunderstood, and too powerfully to be disobeyed ; then it is that we feel it a duty thus to echo that voice to the County, and to call its general and particular attention to the state

of the Poor, which to be questioned is to be resolved, to be considered is to be served, to be enquired into is to be amended.

Having we trust removed the principal prejudices that were in the way of the decision, or even discussion, of this subject; and having shewn that it is not only safe, but even cautious, expedient, serviceable, and requisite, to entertain it; we rely in the first place on having secured our previous object, the general attention to the condition of the poor, as in itself a great step towards the gradual improvement of it; earnestly therefore solicitous to retain and direct that attention, so beneficially raised, to the utmost farther advantage, we trust that all descriptions of men will promote the consideration and conduct of this subject in whatever way their several opinions, situations, and powers may be directed. Let the object of it be constantly kept in view; let the language of it loudly resound; let the common concern, and every particular part of its conduct, be widely extended throughout the County; let it partake of our private habits, and public intercourses; let it occupy our Benches of Magistrates, our Churches of Clergy, our Vestries of Parishioners.

Perhaps there is no more obvious, easy, and effectual way of universal, concurrent exertion in this common cause, than by the means of Vestries; not such as they too frequently are in their present neglected, partial state, but restored as they should be to their original design by that which is alone wanting to their general respect and utility, the being properly attended. As there is no cause to which we may attribute the decline of parochial business, and thence in part the decline of the poor, more than to the abuse of Vestries, chiefly from their being ill attended, so there is no better remedy than the restoration of them, principally by their being better attended. We therefore recommend Vestries being speedily appointed in every parish; at which the principal inhabitants in property and intelligence, with the Clergyman and Parish Officers, may attend and together

together devise the best local modes, as being more feasible than any general measures, of proceeding in the accomplishment of this most indispensable object, the consideration of the labouring poor.

At the same time however that we recommend this subject thus to the general co-operation of the public mind; without presuming to prescribe its particular direction, we submit to their perusal, reflection, and as far as they may severally approve, adoption, the following Facts and Opinions as the general result of the researches we have made, and the returns we have obtained.

There are three general descriptions of Labourers in Husbandry— *Descrip
of
Labou*

1st. Domestic Servants.

2d. Working by the Piece, or Task-work.

3d. At daily, or weekly, Wages.

1st. Domestic Servants are necessarily the least numerous, because confined to the little accommodation their masters have, after that of their own families, for boarding and lodging others. They are usually single, as in the case of being married there are objections both on the part of masters and servants to their being domesticated; which however extend more to lodging than boarding: therefore there are many partially domesticated only, boarded not lodged; of these some are married, though it is a matter of public policy as well as of private happiness, which always should go together, to separate families as little as possible in their domestic habits consistently with their work; and the grand principle of affection cannot be too much calculated for where the presence of that one chief cement of society probably prevails the more in proportion to the absence of those others of interest, comfort, and convenience. Their yearly wages vary from about

five

five pounds to nine. This is perhaps the most beneficial condition of labourers, not so much from what they actually earn, which is less than in the next, but from their being mostly single; from their being more familiarised under the constant observation, and thence attention of their masters; above all from their being provided with sufficiency of subsistence in quantity and quality, and their having therefore the least left to their own discretion in providing and managing for themselves; since the general maxim, that "the less responsibility is left to themselves the better," applies to this case particularly; for besides the abilities, attention, and discretion, all requisite to œconomy, the master can cheaper and better provide for all his servants together than they can severally for themselves. As wholly domesticated servants are best conditioned, those in part so are the next, and though not the lodging, the boarding of labourers may for the above reasons be very advantageously extended to the greatest number possible.

2d. Those working by the piece, or task-work, labour to the most actual gain both for themselves and their masters, being generally able to earn with full employ from 12 to 15 shillings per week in the summer, and from 10 to 12 in the winter; and the work being proportioned to the pay is the most justly appreciated and rewarded. But an equitable proportionate rate of valuing task-work should at the same time uniformly pervade the whole parish, without either the exorbitance of some servants who might exact too much, or the oppression of some masters who might allow too little, pay, in proportion to work done; by which artifices task-work may be either raised inordinately above, or sunk unreasonably below, the standard even of weekly labour. The practice of task-work has of late been gradually extended, and it is highly recommended to be still more so, with the above limitation, and with this farther caution to both masters and servants, who are equally interested in it, that the exertions in it be not carried, as they are liable, to excess; for in some instances,

instances, particularly in harvest, labourers overwork themselves, and thence become often disabled by fatigue or disorder from continuing that work which to be constant should be uniform and moderate. Though these earn more, and therefore should seem able to thrive better than the last, yet having more left to their own management, and as they are generally married, having their families as well as themselves to provide for, they are more dependant on that œconomy which requires not only good conduct but great judgment to use, and are therefore more likely to mispend or mismanage their income. The chief objects therefore towards them are to regulate their exertions in labour, and to advise and assist them in œconomy.

3d. Labourers at daily or weekly wages are the most numerous and most necessitous class, because they gain in fact the least, have most to manage for themselves, and being generally married, have the greatest number to provide for. Their late average wages have been only 8s. a week, but as many masters, much to their interest and humanity, have already raised them to 9s. and more are doing so daily, it is hoped they are progressively attaining at least that height. These are comparatively with the others the worst conditioned, whereas in policy they ought to be made the best, because thence marriage and consequently population would be promoted, and because the difference in subsistence of the labourer operates more against the employer in *this* than in any other mode of work, as they are paid by time, the more or less use of which depends on their subsistence, and not their subsistence on it. In a given work to be performed, the time used may be of little consequence to the task-master, though even then there are such different ways of its performance, and it is often of such importance to be expedited, as in all harvesting, both which depend on the capability arising from subsistence, that it is even in that case an object well worth attention; but in a given time the work that may be performed is of the utmost consequence to the master, and depends jointly on the inclination and strength of the servant,

servant, the latter of which almost entirely, and even the former in some degree, depends on subsistence, for not only the strength but the spirit of man is much affected by the kind and degree of subsistence, therefore emphatically called *support*.

It would much improve the condition of both the above descriptions of labourers, if *Cottages* were multiplied, and dispersed about the estates where they labour, with small pieces of ground annexed, for their own proper cultivation and advantage; by which the loss of time and the actual labour of going to and from work at a distance would be saved from such fruitless waste to be employed in the fruitful cultivation of such pieces of ground, the benefit of which would greatly tend to increase the support and comfort of the labourer, without any immediate loss, and much mediate gain, to the employer. As it is chiefly this practice which renders even the state of Slavery in the West Indies tolerable, what an advantage would it be to the state of free Service here!

General Observations applicable to all the above conditions :

All single labourers in health can so amply provide for themselves in any of these conditions, that there is more fear of their earning enough to indulge habits of idleness, drunkenness, or other vices, than not enough to obtain all the necessaries and comforts incident to their situation; it is therefore chiefly to be inculcated to them to use all industry in procuring, economy in managing, and prudence in saving, what they may so soon want when married, or sick, and must at any rate when old. How often has the labourer, in common with all other classes of men, lamented his past improvidence in not laying up part of the harvest of youth for the urgent domestic demands of marriage, the wasting wants of sickness, the barren importunities of age!

This

This œconomy in all cases is the more to be urged, because the *œconom* difference in comforts of the same families at the same expence, well or ill conducted, is greater often than that of different families, at different expences. There is more difference comparatively in the mode of living from œconomy, than from income; the deficiency in income may possibly be made up by increase of work or wages, but the want of œconomy is irremediable, and the least income in question *with it*, will do more than the greatest *without it*. No Master can in the first place afford wages, next no Overseer can make allowance, lastly no Magistrate can order relief, enough, on any calculation but that of their being severally well managed. If the poor do not prudently serve themselves, none can effectually assist them; if they are not their own friends, none can sufficiently befriend them; the idle in procuring, or the wasteful in using, the means of subsistence, have neither merit in themselves to deserve, nor have others power to grant them, that supply which is alone due, and can be alone afforded, to the honest, industrious, and prudent. For of this let the poor be assured by the example of others without waiting for their own painful experience, that, besides the disgrace of becoming by their own fault dependant on others, when they might by their own merit have had the credit and benefit of being independent on them, the pittance they can at the utmost expect, and the maintenance at the utmost receive, with great difficulty from others, are far less and worse than the support they might have easily secured to themselves by their own industry and prudence; and that as certainly as virtue would at first have been its own reward, so vice must be at last its own punishment. It is a clear fact that the meritorious poor have an honest, laudable pride, which should always be encouraged, to keep themselves from the parish, because they know and feel it is usually by fault not by misfortune that most come thither; and therefore as it is often a disgrace, always a grievance, too much pains cannot be taken by themselves, or by others, to prevent their being reduced to it, or to rescue them from it, which their own general efforts, with occasional assistance and

some-

sometimes even attention alone of others, will often effect, equally to the lasting advantage of the poor themselves, and the final disburthening of their very assistants. This cannot be too much recommended to the charity of individuals, and to the policy of parishes.

It highly then interests all conversant with the poor, who ought to be literally all, and it is hoped are most, to consult and co-operate with them in the practice of œconomy; it is far more useful to teach them to spend less, or to save a little, than to give them much more. This mere attention without expence, this thrifty generosity, this unbought grace, this costless care, this cheap support of poverty, is the sort of charity which is worth most, costs least, and should be the more exerted by those whom fortune has not enabled to use its other more expensive but less valuable exertions. It peculiarly becomes the females in families, in proportion to their leisure and habits being favourable to it, to promote this welcome work; and if the rich especially would unite the two offices of attention and dispensation to the poor, procuring them to be taught suitable work, and furnishing them with materials for it, the joint result of those who should contribute, or who should co-operate, or above all who should do both, would in proportion to its extent approach to a general blessing, but at least in every single case would be a particular benefit.* When it is considered how easily, we trust it will be seen how frequently, such Charity will prevail, which, like Mercy, is twice blessed,—“It blesseth him that gives and him that takes;—and like that also,—“ ’Tis mightiest in the mightiest.”

One obvious way of masters promoting this great point of œconomy in their servants is to lessen the objects of it, by leaving as little as possible to their own management: the more of their maintenance they receive in kind, and the less in money, the better, as the less

* See Note, p. 37.

passes through their own hands, the less they can suffer by their own improvidence and misapplication, or the imposition of others ; the greatest degree of which arises from their being obliged to have recourse to little retail *Shops*, at the double disadvantage of paying the most for the worst commodities, which two-fold imposition constitutes perhaps the greatest grievance in villages. This is best obviated by boarding them wholly where practicable, where not, at least by partly providing them with beer, and besides furnishing them, at prime cost, with the best wheat, barley, bacon, or other necessaries. Every master should be partly in the place of a Shop-keeper to his servants, with this difference only, that it should be without his own gain. If there be any objection arising from debt being thus liable to be incurred, and thence service to be deserted ; it may be suffered only to extend as far as wages due, being indeed meant to be substituted in part for wages ; but if any credit is to be given them, he can best give it who has the security of their service. If they be already indebted to the shopkeepers, and therefore dependant on them, it is perhaps the best object of parochial, or private charity, to extricate them from such debts, the ease of incurring which is an additional motive for discouraging those shops ; and the dependance on them on account of debt is a most grievous oppression leading to a still grosser imposition ; all which, instead of being objections, are farther inducements to the above practice of masters. A lesson may here be taken from that great school of œconomy, the Army, the chief principle of which is to keep back a part of the pay for the best supply of some of the chief articles at the cheapest rate ; and that which is compulsorily done there may be to equal advantage voluntarily done here. When the master provides for many servants, there are in the first instance, besides others, all the numerous advantages in price and quality that wholesale has over retail. This and similar concern taken by the Master in favour of the Servant, is to the one no immediate loss, much mediate gain, to the other infinite benefit.

Next to the single in all conditions, who ought to save part of their income, the married with wives, and not children, should save as much, because the wife not only can earn her own maintenance, but perform many offices of œconomy for the husband ; the difference in the general conditions is chiefly seen in the number of children they can maintain, which it is impossible by a general rule to ascertain, because it must vary with the following several circumstances, on which it jointly depends, all which vary in themselves ; namely, the nature of their subsistence, the amount of their income under the best employment, and of their expenditure under the best management, together with the fluctuating prices of necessaries ; to which several considerations we proceed ; and all which being first placed in the most improveable state, it will appear that the remaining demands on the establishment of the poor would be contracted in number and extent ; that the masters would be better served, and the servants better subsisted.

Subsistence. *Subsistence* is the most important and difficult of all the component parts of this subject. Perhaps no question ever imported a nation collectively and individually more deeply to consider with the united views of policy and humanity than this, What are the Necessaries of Life ? Thus far is certain, they are in man, as they are uniformly through all nature, what are requisite to support his frame for its longest continuance, and its best use ; and this is no less the language of philosophy than philanthropy ; for the most proper assistance to the individual is the most productive to the community. Though our returns do not enable us to specify the precise nature and amount of it, yet they fully authenticate the general principle and practice of it. They agree uniformly that some *animal food* is necessary to the proper subsistence of the laborious, so as to do most justice to their employers, themselves, and families, and thence of course to do most benefit to the community. They differ in some degree as to the frequency of it ; once a day being the greatest, and three times a week the

the least extreme in them—but though there may be some doubt which of these is absolutely essential, there can be none which is preferable, if practicable; the practicability must therefore determine the mean between these two extremes, the greatest practical allowance of animal food being clearly the most eligible. The most beneficial, as well as cheap use of animal food, is alternately Bacon and other Meats, the latter chiefly in broth, mixed with vegetable and other ingredients; for the comparative *change*, and mixture, of diet are the next objects to its positive *kind*. This calculation of animal food is chiefly for the labourer, less in proportion to their work for women, and little or none for children who do not labour at all.

One of the poorest, yet most laborious countries, Ireland, affords a strong instance of the good effects of animal food; for, though they have very little meat, they almost live on Milk, which is in the nature of animal food, and as such very nutritious, being in fact a natural broth; they have besides plenty of the best of all vegetables, Potatoes. If this country abounded in milk as cheaply, there would be less occasion for other animal food; but in this country it is a dearer subsistence than meat; in few places to be got in quantity, in some not at all. Cheese, or Butter, as a chief support, would be as dear as meat, and a worse substitute than milk, yet certainly the use of cheese proportionably decreases the requisite quantity of meat, and is therefore very eligible to be used, especially as it is in the nature of animal food, though remote, stale, and salted, therefore less so than milk.

Beer should certainly make a part of daily subsistence, and especially at the meals without meat, not being perhaps at all necessary at meals with meat. Vegetables, chiefly Potatoes as best and cheapest, should also make a part; Bread still being the greatest and best part of subsistence, as being common to all the rest, and constituting the staple commodity of the poor.

To

To the want of sufficient subsistence on animal food, and malt liquor, are to be attributed several pernicious habits, particularly the use of spirits, and what has of late increased to a very injurious degree, of Tea as a substitute, bad indeed, for almost all other support; being a vain present attempt to supply to the spirits of the mind what is wanting to the strength of the body, but in its lasting effects impairing the nerves, and thence equally injuring both the body and the mind, and tho' perhaps beginning with elevation, certainly ending in depression. It is demonstrable in reason, as it is found in fact, that these are the bad consequences of proper subsistence withholden. A sufficiency in quality and quantity both of *food* and *drink* is requisite; decrease in one is ill made up by increase in the other; diminution of proper food cannot be made up by addition to *proper* drink; it is therefore in vain attempted by introduction of *improper*. As then no quantity of Beer, if it could be got, would be a substitute for Meat; Spirituous Liquor is had recourse to, which may produce false exhilaration, or real oblivion, for which different effects it is sought by persons of different complexions, the intemperate, or the despondent, those of bad minds, or broken hearts; but it can never supply support for the purpose of constant labour, because it incapacitates at the time, and enervates afterwards. The labourer being however excluded from spirits, for the same reason, the expence, that he is from meat, and even from beer, flies for refuge to Tea, which is in fact neither more nor less than the cheapest dram, operating in a similar but only more gradual manner than other drams; but what is wanting to its immediate bad effects in quality, is made up in quantity and frequency, to its final bad consequences; and when, as in many cases, it forms the greatest portion of the whole, sometimes is almost the sole subsistence, it is to be deprecated more even than other drams, because it is more easily procured, and more imperceptibly though not less finally injurious. Since therefore this abuse of Tea as a sole, or chief support, has probably arisen from the disuse

use of beer, and unconnected as it may at first seem with it, yet, as it has been proved, of *meat* also ; the obvious, the only remedy is, the return to animal food and beer, those genuine supports of labour, of life, for which any other are vainly in effect, as cruelly in attempt, endeavoured to be substituted.

Besides the above reasonable inferences, there is a practical proof, which seems conclusive for both malt liquor and animal food, in this plain fact, that there is no instance of a master, who boards his own servants in husbandry, not allowing them both meat and beer. Unless then it can be supposed that farmers, the most economical in all other cases, are profuse in this one alone, of subsisting their servants, such subsistence is requisite. Either these live too well, or the others too ill ; a dilemma which can scarcely have an alternative, still less leave a doubt, in sense or feeling ; for if they find, as they do, the allowance of such subsistence requisite for their domestic labourers, they should also allow wages enough to procure the same to their other labourers, because they are meant to do the same work. By parity of reasoning, Magistrates should grant similar relief to labourers on a calculation for similar subsistence.

It is repeated here (according to the general principle that pervades the Report) that this calculation of subsistence is not meant for the exclusive benefit of the Labourer, but also of the Employer ; if any Employer answer, as they are too apt hastily to do, that they cannot afford such subsistence to their servants, we reply that they would be gaining, not losing by the change ; in short, that the better support of their labourers is recommended for their own advantage immediately on a balance of wages paid and work done, and mediately from the many great considerations of sickness prevented, life continued, strength increased, spirit contented, honesty retained, quiet established, order confirmed, security gained, with all the consequences of these and numberless advantages to society which this one single act of wisdom

wisdom and virtue would produce. Next to religious truth, with which it closely corresponds, there is none of more consequence to mankind than this great natural truth in its full extent, that, "The Labourer is worthy of his Hire."

wance. The kind of subsistence being thus first settled, the next consideration is to calculate the *amount* of it. As the value of money varies with the price of commodities in different parts at the same time, and in the same parts at different times, it follows that money can be no *common* measure of labour or of supply. The same reasoning applies against any *common* practice as to what number of children a labourer can support, which can therefore never be universally ascertained. We must have recourse then to some fixed general principle, equally applicable to all particular varying cases, which we are persuaded does exist, and which we presume to recommend as follows, to Masters first in their allowance of Wages, next to Overseers in their granting Assistance, lastly to Magistrates in their ordering Relief; namely, in any of these stages of the case, but particularly in the last, which is the only peremptory decision to which therefore the other two should have reference,—*To determine what is the proper Subsistence; what is its local amount; what the several parts of the family do or may earn; and finally to order in relief whatever may be the deficiency of the greatest Income under the best employment from the least Outgoing under the best management.* We can foresee no objection to this general principle laid down, can discover no fallacy, can apprehend no failure in it; but it seems as unanswerable in theory as unobjectionable in practice. We are therefore sanguine in our hope of its adoption, and confident in our reliance on the success of its execution; for, while it meets the substance of each particular case, it also makes allowance for any difference of opinion which may still prevail on any of the former questions, especially on that relative to the precise kind of subsistence. In this process, the best way of employment, maintenance, and œconomy, for the whole family, are altogether in question before the

the parties themselves, the Parish Officers, and the Magistrates, and the most happy result may be expected from their mutual attention to all these considerations.

What has been hitherto said is chiefly on a supposition of health; *Sickn* in cases of sickness the same principle applies, that subsistence proper to the sick, different from, and less than that to the healthy, is to be calculated for; the whole expence however of the sick for food and physic together is full as much as that of the healthy for food alone; therefore the most burthensome state possible of the poor is sickness, because in it there must be all relief, and no return; in it there is no employment to be opposed to support, no set-off of service for subsistence; all is outgoing, no income; as it is the most expensive, so it is the most urgent, and as it was proved that the best subsistence in quality and quantity for the healthy to receive is also the most productive to the employer to give, so there is no doubt the best, most expeditious, and most effectual remedy for the sick to have, is the most advantageous for the parish to administer; for though by sickness the present possession of labour is lost, the future reversion of it is by remedy secured; sickness is only the suspension of that labour, death its loss; and as population is the wealth of a country, depopulation is its poverty. It is beyond calculation how much is lost in interest and labour by tardy and insufficient attention to the sick labourer; and innumerable are the instances wherein an early and efficient remedy would have expedited the return to labour together with health, would have prevented lingering disorders, would have preserved valuable lives. Parsimony in remedying illness, is more inhuman, impolitic, and finally expensive also, than in subsisting health. As thus the most burthensome, because totally unproductive, state of the poor is sickness; and as insufficiency of subsistence, with idleness leading to vice, are the commonest causes of that sickness, these are great additional motives for the humane and politic plan of preventing sickness by suitable employment, and proper subsistence,

rather

rather than waiting penitiously till we occasion sickness by want, and thence become subject, besides the intermediate loss of work, to the greater expence in relieving, than we should have been in preventing it. Never did the wholesome proverbial truth apply more to any case than this, that Prevention is better than Remedy.

Our County Hospital comes here most seasonably and powerfully in aid of parishes, the voluntary contributions to the one saving the compulsory rates of the other, and besides the expence saved, superior advice and assistance being at the same time obtained ; by which the subscribers in this instance are affording obviously a double advantage, in relieving the individuals, and so far in disburthening the parishes ; a consideration which, added to so many others, it is hoped will have its due weight in supporting and increasing the funds of that most beneficial Charity. It is enough to mention, in order to reprobate and thence remove, the most groundless and injurious prejudice sometimes found to exist in the poor against going into the Hospital, when it is not too much to say that the poorest patient in it is as well medically and otherwise attended and administered to as the richest individual can be out of it, and much better than the generality of persons can afford or procure for themselves.

*afures
of
elief.*

The particular measures to be pursued, under the above mentioned general principle of relief, being left to the discretion of the Magistrates and others concerned under the local circumstances of the several cases, the following general objects of their enquiry are suggested to them ; Whether the different parts of the family capable of any employment are employed at all, and in the most suitable way ; —whether any established work that already exists can be improved, or any new work introduced ; especially whether the Overseers have according to the 43d Eliz. 2. procured a convenient stock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, and other necessary ware and stuff, to set the poor to work ;—whether any House of Industry, or School of Industry, be

already

already instituted, and properly conducted ; if not, whether any such can be easily introduced ;—whether any children may be apprenticed to wholesome trades in the parish, or if not, out of it. It is here proper to correct a vulgar error, that they are not in law *liable* to be apprenticed out of the parish, and to combat a vulgar prejudice by which in fact they are *disinclined* to it. As to the doubt in law, generally without limitation, by 43d Eliz. 2. the Churchwardens and Overseers, with the consent of the Justices, may put out poor children of the parish as apprentices, wherever they see convenient ; and as to the objection in fact, it is neither reasonably to be made by the parties themselves, nor attended to by the Justices, or Parish Officers, because it is in substance no more than the children of the poor being, as those of the rich are, separated from their parents for education and employment. Due influence should therefore be used by those whose knowledge qualifies them, and whose authority enables them, to remove these and similar prejudices, but this in particular, against parting with children to be employed and instructed when well, or cured when ill, in a general House of Industry ; instead of their being neglected in mind and body, corrupted, and abandoned, in private houses of idleness. This most injurious and extensive prejudice is the more to be opposed, because it is an obstacle against putting in execution one of the most beneficial acts ever passed for the joint benefit of the poor, the parish, and the public—22d Geo. III. 83. *for the better relief and employment of such persons alone, as are become indigent by Old Age, Sicknes, or Infirmities, and are unable to acquire a maintenance by their Labour; and Orphans, or other Children.*

This brings us to the consideration, and consequent recommendation of such poor Houses of Industry, confined as they properly are by the Act in question to cases of age, infancy, or infirmity. The returns uniformly agree in favour of their establishment, either in one large parish, or in smaller parishes united ; the benefit derived from them wherever they have been established makes their number increase

crease continually, and there is little doubt but their great advantage will make them general, if not universal. There are however some prejudices against them, as there must be against all material alterations at first, however beneficial they may be found at last; amongst which the objection to separating families with as little reason applies to this case as it did to apprenticeship; and in this instance the law has made it also compulsory on all to enter into the Parish House, if required, who wish to avail themselves of the Parish Charity. There is such an obvious reciprocity in this, that it is unanswerable in reason, and no less beneficial in fact; it is as much for the benefit of the individuals themselves as of the parish, and public, that they should be instructed and employed thus in a better way than they could otherwise be. Besides this unreasonable objection as to the inclination of the poor, there is another, equally unfounded, as to the interest of the parish, that the expence lies more on the present than future parishioners, on account of the money immediately laid out in the first and principal expence of building the House. But this supposed difference by no means exists; for it is plain no more in either case is an incumbrance on the parish than the interest on the fund first raised. The fund itself is raised, if at all, by voluntary loan of individuals, without which the establishment cannot take place at all; and it is an incidental advantage in this plan, that it holds forth the best security of the poor rates for individuals who have money to vest at the greatest legal interest, which opportunity, considering the frequent losses of individuals from vesting their money on insufficient security, is in itself of great advantage to the parishioners. So much for the comparative difference between present and future parishioners; and as to the positive expence, the annual interest, which is alone payable, is at the utmost less than the rent of the several single parish houses before hired. Having shewn that these alledged disadvantages do not exist, it is plain that there are many great advantages in it. Persons collected together in one general house are more easily instructed, employed,

employed, and overlooked in work, more cheaply and properly subsisted in health, more carefully attended in age, or infancy, more ably remedied in sickness; in all these cases more inured to the habits of cleanliness and industry, more used to the practice of morality, and better informed of the principles of religion, than they could be if dispersed in separate small houses by themselves. In the case especially of parishes united for this purpose under the Act, it is a farther great advantage that there can be no expence or litigation as to removals, or any other disputes respecting settlements, between such parishes, who would then have but one common concern instead of separate interests. The real objections which did long prevail in point of efficacy and interest, namely, the incompetency of such a plan without a particular Act of Parliament, and the expence of obtaining that, are now removed by the general Act of 22d Geo. III. 83.

There are persons, conversant with this subject too, who are sanguine enough to suppose that under these establishments the poor might be able to procure their own maintenance by their own labour. Without relying on such extreme speculations, it is found by experience they might, thus employed, very much contribute towards it. This plan also affords the best, if not only hope, of a gradual future decrease in the poor rates, of which consequence the places where they have prevailed afford examples. But independent of the interest in what is gained by employment, the intrinsic value of it is great positively as an occupation, and negatively as it prevents idleness, with all its consequences of vice and wickedness, so ruinous to individuals, and injurious to the community.

The same recommendation is given of Friendly Societies, against *Frien* which also the same objection lay as to the legal security of them, *Societ* till that is now fully effected by 33d Geo. III. 54. amended the last Session.

In

In addition to these Acts, which are yet in partial use only, that great Palladium of the Poor, 43d Eliz. 2. which is still the general law, ought, where not suspended by the above Acts, to be the general practice, and cannot be too often referred to, because it is too often neglected.

As to Instruction, it is sufficiently secured to the principal objects of charitable education, where general Houses of Industry prevail; where they do not, some excitement is wanting to induce the poor, especially children, to attend Divine Service, and some instruction to enable them to understand it. Such easy attendance, and such plain intelligence, appears to be the desirable mean between the extremes of that supine ignorance which neglects or disregards Religion, and that supposed learning, that zeal beyond knowledge, which tends to enthusiasm. It is with such limitation only that Sunday or other Schools for the Poor are beneficial; but as far as they have any tendency to raise an *idea* of scholarship, to make those who attend them *conceive* they are scholars, and thence to place them in their *own conceit* above common labour, they become prejudicial instead of serviceable to the community. If thus they are taught, not directly for the purpose, which is out of the question, but indirectly to the effect, of despising common labour, it is a most unfortunate though undesigned consequence of the best intentions with which such schools are ever undoubtedly founded. Thus much it has been thought proper to say, not to discourage the establishment, but to limit the purposes, of Sunday and other Schools, as far only as concerns the children of the labouring poor.

Whatever doubt there may be as to the requisite degree of intellectual learning for the children of the labouring poor, there can be none as to the use of their manual instruction. Therefore Schools of Industry, with small suitable rewards and punishments, are most strongly recommended, wherein boys may learn the use and exercise of

of implements in husbandry, and girls of their needle, with spinning, and other plain work, whereby they may hereafter do so many economical offices for themselves and their relatives; by which notability the great object of domestic economy is so much promoted. Not only is this early habit of employment important in what it does, but in what it prevents; for too often the only alternative is instruction, or corruption; honest industry, or thievish idleness; and if children are not thus well employed, they are likely to be ill employed, and instructed too, in petty thefts of wood, or other pilfering, to their own perdition, and the injury of others. The experience of the ease and advantage, even to the patrons as well as the poor, of such public or private institutions, wherever they prevail, is a great inducement to their being further extended either by parishes or individuals.*

Amongst the various opinions as to the different modes of relief, this especially prevails, that it can be best done by keeping the principal articles of subsistence, as for instance Wheat and Malt, at a certain standing price for labourers, and paying the difference between that and the market price out of the poor rates, by which the surplus of wages is left to buy other things. This is undoubtedly a very desirable way, but it is doubtful whether it is sufficiently limitable to the sole objects of it, and whether it is practicable in Law; for we must always calculate on legal compulsion in any general plan, which we must be able, as we shall frequently be driven, to have re-

*Differ-
Mode-
Relief*

* The easy practicability and obvious benefit of such institutions, parochial or private, are clearly proved in Mr. Ruggles's History of the Poor, Letter ix. vol. i. which able and useful work is not only referred to in this, but every part of the subject of the poor; and similar experiments to that which he himself made with success are recommended to other individuals, of instructing, employing, and furnishing with materials, in domestic work, such parts of poor families as cannot do husbandry work.

course to. As to the practicability, it is difficult to make any standard from the benefit of which any labourer should be excluded, and certainly then many would partake of the charity who are not objects; therefore the rates would be grievously increased, which are but too burthensome when the absolutely necessitous alone are relieved. As to the legality, it is not strictly a legal use of the poor rate in the first place, and therefore may be resisted by any parishioner; but in the next, it could not be enforced in way of relief by Magistrates; nor indeed can any other specific mode of relief be ordered, but money; which is an answer to this and all other modes of either allowance in the first instance, or relief in the last, except that of regulating wages, or of ordering relief in money, not in kind. All therefore that is said in this Report as to the improvement of the Poor, is meant as recommendation only, except that of wages, or relief in money, the former of which is in the discretion of the Bench of Sessions to regulate, the latter of the individual Magistrates. We wish to be saved the necessity of interfering now even to regulate wages, and therefore forbear to propose that measure at present to the Bench, in the hope that our recommendation of the various measures of improvement in the condition of the poor, and amongst others that of some rise of wages, together with the concurrent practice of individual Magistrates in their orders of relief, may so far succeed as to preclude the necessity which may otherwise compel the Bench to have recourse to such compulsory regulation of wages.

Though money is as before stated no accurate measure of support, yet as the general fact is true, that the price of necessaries, independent of the present emergency, has risen more than the wages of labour; some small rise of wages is reasonable, though it is by no means requisite to be equal, in itself alone, to the rise of necessaries, because the condition of the poor is proposed in a small part only to be amended by increased wages, but in a greater part by improved employment, maintenance, and œconomy. There is besides some reason

reason for the master increasing the wages in some small degree proportionably with the increase of necessaries, because the very increase of necessaries, especially in wheat and malt, is so much addition to the price for which the master sells ; and as he receives much more for the produce of labour, he may well pay something more for the labour itself. It is however clearly eligible that all the other modes of improvement, by the best employment, maintenance, and œconomy, should be first secured, and preferred, before increase of wages, both as that is most burthensome to the master, and the least beneficial to the servant. Wherever after all other trials made it is finally found that sufficient subsistence is otherwise not attainable, this last mode of increase in allowance should be made by masters ; otherwise, what comes nearly to the same thing, but in a more objectionable way, it must be made up either by the Sessions raising wages, or the Magistrates ordering relief ; but though there is this similitude to the master in expence, there is great difference to the servant in satisfaction of mind, in cheerfulness at labour, in gratitude for kindness, which are sufficient reasons for the masters themselves preferring the mode that make the servants feel obliged to them alone for the improvement in their condition.

It must be admitted that the late necessary improvement in the condition of the common soldier is a reason positively and comparatively for that also of the common labourer ; for it is extended to the one on precisely the same grounds on which it is wanted by the other ; and it is besides highly politic to preserve that comparison between the general condition of one common man and another, which is essential to the content of all, by which all the departments equally standing in need of their assistance may be equally supplied with it, and the co-operation of the community, which alone constitutes its welfare, be secured.

It is finally to be observed that the utmost improvement in the condition

dition of labourers, which is here recommended to *all* employers, is no more than what is already adopted by the most judicious and generous of them, who see and feel the propriety, without waiting for the necessity of it, and whose example being certainly the best in all views is therefore most desirable to be followed by others ; but if it be not sufficient to hold forth the conduct of the wise and better, or at least more considerate part of mankind, as a voluntary example to the rest, it ought to be made a compulsory rule for them.

Having discussed the principal body of our subject, as pointed out by the Enquiry, there is one collateral branch of it still requisite another to be supported, because it is such a branch as being cut off, or even mutilated, would endanger the whole body ; it is the continuance of private voluntary charity as connected essentially with the public establishment for the poor.

*private
charity.* As every ordinary establishment for the poor, which has the comprehensive object of being general must be liable to particular deficiencies, so our own stands in need of collateral assistance from individuals who are capable of supplying those wants which the commonalty would be improperly required, because in fact unable, to satisfy. After the full *harvest* of abundance which enables the proprietor to provide for the wants of the labourer, those who come not under the benefit of these regular wages of justice legally paid, are still entitled to the voluntary *gleanings* of humanity freely offered. Thus we, who are required under compulsion of the law of society to contribute to the supplies of the general establishment, are also called upon with more obligatory, though as we are free agents, less compulsory, law of nature, to make up the deficiencies of it. The law which directs that confines it to the removal of extreme wants, and the remedy of urgent disorders, and from its compulsory nature it was of course limited to mere cases of necessity. For the spirit of our laws, while it enforces necessary duties, compels us to nothing but

but what is indispensable; as there is no freedom from the demands of nature in ourselves, so there is no discretion left us about supplying them in others. Nature, which is the tyrant's tyrant, for it compels him to the good that he abhors, is the mild governor of the humane, for it directs him to the good that he loves. The bad only feel this a painful restraint; the good find it a pleasing necessity; and that which is the inclination of the good, is properly made the obligation to the bad. Content with this narrow but necessary limit, legal compulsion ends its office as *Guardian* of the Poor, leaving the rest to the faithful trusts of the sentiments of our minds, the feelings of our hearts, the compunctions of our consciences, as their *Friends*; but this great charge of the overplus of charity is not thus left without a practical security for the provision against the infirmities of one part of mankind in the generosity of the other. So far is the Legislature from having reason to repent the sacred deposit of the wants of some in the abundance of others, that as many instances might be found of the surplus of charity, as of its deficiency.

Thus though the law does not *compel* to more charity, it *calculates* for more; and were not more done in charity than is required by law, more, much more, must be required by law. Therefore every free donation, or other act of voluntary charity, is to be considered with two views; first as it is an immediate relief to the objects of it, and next as it is so far a disburthening of the public legal establishment.

This is such a view that the community can have no greater. Of the large description of persons who contribute to that establishment, many are not much farther removed from being objects of charity than from being dispensers of it, and approach rather to the want which requires supply to themselves than to the abundance which enables them to furnish it to others. So small are

often the boundaries between the givers and receivers of charity, that the very burthen of contributing to the public rates for others has often made them stand in need of their assistance themselves. It is in aid also of this description of men, to lighten that burthen from which they cannot be entirely relieved, that we are instigated by all social and selfish motives to exert ourselves in this joint cause of humanity and policy.

Poor
ates.

In farther promotion of this view, the whole subject of the Poor Rates requires examination. While they are certainly even in their *proper* use much increased, and still increasing, yet it is also observable that *improper* abuses have crept into them, by which they become more and more encumbered with what does not properly belong to them; therefore the poor appear to have more than they really have contributed to them, while of course the contributors are in the same proportion burthened. In fact the general Poor Rate consists commonly of the proper Poor Rate, the County Rate, and often the Church Rate. In an average of years ending in 1785, it appears by the Parliamentary documents, that of the whole collected nominally for the poor, one seventh part was not really so; and the growing practice lately of throwing the great expences under the several Acts, as in the Land Quota Bill, into the Poor Rate, tends still more to enlarge it; besides which legal use, a great illegal abuse prevails in many parishes of introducing into it matters relative to the Highways, and other totally extraneous articles. These practices, so injurious to the payers and receivers of the Poor Rate will continue until the more intelligent and honourable Parishioners interfere, as they ought, to check these and similar abuses; in short, until Vestries become, what they were always meant, general assemblies of Parishioners, instead of what they too often are, partial confederacies of Parish Officers. It is therefore justice to the Poor, who have the repute of greater contributions than they have the benefit of, to state this grievance, and as far as may be to remedy it,

by

by introducing as little as possible into the Poor Rate that does not properly belong to it, and especially by avoiding, and disallowing all unnecessary expences of entertainments or other extravagances, which are as unfeeling and unsuitable to the occasion as the barbarous custom, not otherwise unlike them, in some countries, of festivals at funerals !

Under the same line of objection comes the pernicious practice of *Farming the Poor*, by which bargain middle men between the contributors and receivers of rates, those licenced jobbers in beggary, hired plunderers of paupers, allowedly convert to themselves part of what is professedly granted to the Poor ; their other grievances are only incidental abuses, this a plan of oppression, a system of imposition, an aberration calculated for, a deviation designed ; for their direct interest lies in the injury of the Poor ; because all they can curtail them of, or stint them in, is so much to their own direct advantage ; the worse they are kept, the better for their keepers. It is sufficient reprobation of this practice of Contractors, that directly the reverse to it is the establishment of Governors of Houses of Industry under 22d Geo. III. namely, a settled salary. Perhaps the best way would be that practised of late, particularly in employment of criminals, rewarding their superintendant, and even themselves, in proportion to their work, which therefore he and they have an interest in promoting. The same in effect is true of Farmers of the Poor, that was before stated of Retailers to them ; in one case so much granted to them is withholden, in the other so much allowed to them is extorted, from them.

We cannot at any time be too much impressed with this double *Private Char* duty of Charity, but especially at the present, when there are peculiar circumstances tending to its prejudice. The increasing demands on us for *other* purposes may be some detriment to *this* ; and as they are

are obligatory, while this is optional, it is much to be dreaded that, under the addition of public payments, and the advancement of common expences, Private Charity may receive a check. Such a consequence in our conduct, from that or any other cause, is to be most solemnly protested against on all the grounds of self interest and social love. If the rich, instead of rising with the occasion, succumb under it ; if instead of increasing, which is to be wished, or at least continuing, their present exercise of private charity, they on the contrary from their additional public burthens diminish it, then indeed should we incur the risk of the eternal curse, and the temporal sufferance, of the uncharitable ; then should we find that the impolicy of such conduct would be as dangerous to our present happiness, peace, and security, as its inhumanity to our future salvation ; then shall we see too late the intimate connection and dependance between the public establishment for the poor and the private charity to them ; that they vary inversely ; that as the latter decreases, the former must increase ; for from the sum of them both together must be produced a given effect, namely, the proper support of the Poor. The absolute necessity as well as propriety of such support must be relied on ; all good men wish it, and all bad men may be assured it must be produced some way. It behoves the good then to devise the best, lest the bad contrive the worst way.

As the above improvident hazardous conduct of uncharitableness is highly to be deprecated, because it has no view but interest, and that mistaken, so it is easily to be avoided ; admitting, what there is no benefit, but great injury in dissembling, if we in fact could, that the pressure of the times may require general œconomy and retrenchment ; it is more easily and safely done in any way than this, which is the very last that either feeling or judgment would direct us to. Is there any alternative between Charity and Luxury ? Can there be a question whether we are to retrench our own *superfluities* or the

the *necessaries* of others? The latter is impossible, therefore let none make the vain as barbarous attempt; we have not the tyrannical power to affect it, if we had the base will. The former is not only practicable, but would be also beneficial to us; the means would be as salutary to ourselves, as the end serviceable to others; or if any be so vicious and corrupt as to reckon it an evil at all, even they must allow, independently of the danger to which it leads, it is infinitely the least of two, of which the other is a direct breach of the social compact under any form of Government whatever, all of which are founded on the implied principle in Nature, paramount to all express Laws of Nations, "That none should have the Superfluities of Life, till all have the Necessaries;"—but so far from retrenchment being an evil, it would operate as a double good, producing the virtue of temperance in ourselves, as well as the blessing of subsistence to others. Let none then say that they cannot afford charity to others; it is an unmanly, immoral, irreligious falsehood, so long as they afford themselves luxury, intemperance, and vice; and those few, if any, who have that qualification, to be excused from charity, of being exempt from vice, are the last who would avail themselves of that or any other excuse. All therefore are called upon to *retrench themselves*, as far as requisite for the *support of others*; nay perhaps they need not, for that purpose, sacrifice their substantial pleasures or real gratifications, but only their indifferent trifles, and insipid superfluities, which have not even the excuse of a passion to be gratified or a taste to be indulged. Renouncing only the excrescencies, without diminishing the supplies, of the Rich, may be in itself sufficient to effect the *additional support* of the Poor; the mere exclusion of the ostentatious garnish, without any defalcation from the plenteous viands, of the sumptuous table, may amply replenish the frugal board. Such retrenchment also should be not only made by the Rich, but for the Poor, for social, not selfish purposes; otherwise retrenchment for our own saving, not for the relief of others, may be Parsimony, instead of Charity;

Charity; but he who thus retrenches from the excesses of Luxury to make up the deficiencies of Penury, is removing two great evils at once, is filling up the deep vale of Misery with the impending precipice of Vanity, and between the two extremes approximating towards the mean level of comfort, or at least diminishing the vast declivity from superfluity to necessity. In fact we are scarcely called upon to spare to others any thing worth keeping ourselves; it is more to be feared that all the sacrifices, all the retrenchments, requisite to be made by us for the benefit of others in Charity, would still not be enough for own advantage in Temperance. Here then is an easy opportunity, at a cheap rate, to confirm private security by public content, to bestow benefit, acquire merit, and receive credit; for he has attained the highest moral excellence who effects the best ends of Charity by the best means of Temperance, a primary Happiness by a cardinal Virtue!

The plain result from this part of the subject is, That at least the *continuance*, if not *advancement*, of the present improved state of Private Charity to the Poor, is essential to the *sufficiency* of the present Public Establishment for them.

It remains only to recapitulate the chief Heads of the Address at large as

THE

say

THE GENERAL REPORT.

THAT the Poor Rates have of late generally increased.

That the Price of Necessaries has increased in a greater proportion than the Wages of Labour.

That the most suitable Employment, the most proper Maintenance, and the best Management, of the Poor, should become matters of general and particular consideration and adoption.

That Vestries therefore be recommended to be holden in every Parish Church, to be attended by the Minister with the principal Inhabitants, as well as Parish Officers, in which Vestries so constituted and restored to their real respect and original design the Condition of the Poor may be locally considered and improved in the way best adapted to each place.

That it is not now expedient to make a general regulation of Wages of Labour, till the recommendation hereby generally given of some local advancement according to the different occasion for it in different places, shall have proved ineffectual, especially as such Wages are already in an improving state.

That

That Animal Food and Beer, are necessary parts of the proper Subsistence of Labourers, to enable them to do justice, in their work, to themselves, their Employers, and the Community : and that these articles can be secured to them most effectually by Boarding wholly, or in part, with their Masters, or receiving the proper recompense for their Labour as far as may be in Provisions rather than Money.

That it be earnestly recommended to Masters to stand in the place of Shopkeepers to their own Labourers wherever they can, furnishing them with the best commodities at Prime Cost, whereby the extra charge of the Retailer would be wholly saved to them.

That Task-work be extended to every possible case ; with proper pay in proportion to the work done.

That the proper Subsistence of Labourers with their Families in any particular place should be ascertained ; and their income rendered adequate to their necessary expenditure—first by Wages from their Employers ; or where from infirmity or the numbers in family that is impossible ; next the difference between their highest income under the best Employment, and their lowest out-going under the best Management, should be made up in relief granted by Parish Officers ; and lastly in default of them should be ordered by the Magistrates.

That other Parochial Charges be not blended with the Poor Account ; and that all unnecessary Expences for Entertainments and the like be not allowed.

That

That in general it is not adviseable that the Poor should be farmed either with respect to Provision, Employment, or Medicine.

That so much of the 43d Eliz. c. 2. as respects setting the Poor to work, and finding Materials for that purpose is often neglected by Overseers, and should be generally enforced.

That Houses of Industry for the Poor, under the regulation of 22d Geo. III. c.83. are strongly to be recommended, either in large single Parishes, or small Parishes united; because exclusive of other weighty reasons these are the chief means of reducing the Poor Rates, as has been generally experienced wherever they have been established and steadily conducted.

That Schools of Industry should be established in aid of the foregoing institutions, as well as of all Work Houses, wherein Boys should be taught common country busines, particularly the use of Implements in Husbandry, by being exercised in working the ground which should, where practicable, be annexed to such Houses; and wherein Girls should learn sewing, spinning, and other plain work.

That Friendly Societies under the 33d Geo. III. are also recommended as another mode of reducing the Poor-Rates.

tion. WE conclude this Address and Report with many apologies for any thing superfluous contained, or essential omitted, in it. As it is offered with diffidence in proportion to its delicacy and difficulty, we rely on its being for the same reason received with indulgence. We intreat therefore a favourable construction of whatever may be equivocal in expression, ambiguous in meaning, or doubtful in operation. If there be any subject on which diffidence before difference in opinion, forbearance before resistance in feeling, hesitation before opposition in conduct, should prevail, it is surely this, which being separately arduous in theory and practice, in both jointly is perhaps the most complicated concern that ever involved at once the feeling, sense, interest, honour, and conscience of the country. Although the institution of the Enquiry was unanimous, not so can be expected the reception of the Address and Report; so far from universal satisfaction inclusively and exclusively being given throughout to all, it cannot even be supposed to be given to any one in every part. We trust however that individual Magistrates, and others, will make allowance for partial errors of commission or omission, provided the general result be admissible; will calculate for some differences of opinion amongst themselves, will make some mutual sacrifices to each other, will compromise for general consent in the gross on terms far short of universal approbation in the detail: on any other than such a principle of accommodation no common measure can ever take place in this business. On a subject wherein the minds of men are so much previously divided, nothing like literal *unanimity in opinion* can be finally produced; but on the above principle some *conformity in conduct* may be expected; at any rate it is hoped that such a majority may determine either the adoption or rejection of the Report, as to satisfy the Public of the due attention of the Bench, and one way or other to quiet a Question, which, having been so much agitated elsewhere, must be decided on here. To that decision we submit our Report most respectfully as to the Bench, and most anxiously as

to

to ourselves ; not from any private personal interest we take in it, of which we have nothing distinct from the rest of the Bench, but from the matter of public concern which in common with them we participate.

THE END.



W

